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ABSTRACT

A role definition instrument was administered to experienced and future teachers at the Universities of Wisconsin (Madison) and Houston in an attempt to identify areas of conflict between the expectations of these groups for the role of teacher. Unlike previous studies, this one focuses on the expectations of the future teacher. The factors of conformity, autonomy, discipline and communication comprised 30.4 percent of the instrument variance. Subject to the restricted sampling, results suggest that a recruitee's adjustment to the pressures to conform within the social system of the school, the maintenance of his professional autonomy, coping with classroom management, and communicating with those in complementary roles may be the four most important preoccupations of the new teacher and as such deserve special attention in teacher training. The Madison groups differed significantly only on discipline, while the Houston groups differed significantly on conformity, autonomy, and discipline. The one significant regional difference for teachers was conformity; significant regional differences for future teachers were on conformity and autonomy. (JLF)

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EXPECTATIONS FOR THE ROLE OF TEACHER: A COMPARISON OF FUTURE TEACHERS AND EXPERIENCED TEACHERS

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A. Introduction

The emphasis placed upon the socialization process in the formation of role expectations (2) suggest that the impact of teacher training may do little to affect the expectations of recruits for the role of teacher. The fact that new and student teachers find their expectations in conflict with those of veteran colleagues (6, 5) and the resulting stress (13) appear to support this notion. Also, the hypothesis that the role of teacher is acquired primarily through on-the-job social interaction with those in complementary roles is consistent with these findings.

Although other studies have examined conflicting expectations for the role of teacher (15, 12) they have not paid much attention to the expectations of the future teacher. This is an area which is of speical interest to those involved in teacher training programs if the ill effects of conflicting expectations, such as stress and withdrawal from the profession (13), reduced effectiveness (1), and ambiguity leading to inefficiency and job dissatisfaction (10) are to be alleviated.

The purpose of this study is to identify some of the aspects of the role of the teacher upon which the expectations of future teachers and experienced teachers concur and diverge as basis for developing ways of minimizing potential role shock once the recruit is on the job.

Another purpose of this study is to determine the degree of generality of expectations for the role of collecting data in two

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geographical regions of the USA. The obvious question of interest is whether differences in expectations are greater within or between regions.

B. Method

1. Subjects

The Subjects (Ss) were volunteers enrolled in education courses at the University of Wisconsin at Madison and the University of Houston. There were 58 Madison Future Teachers (MFT), 14 males and 44 females with a mean age of 21.9 years. There were 46 Madison Experienced Teachers (MET), 15 males and 31 females with a mean age of 32.2 years. The MFT were all undergraduates while the MET were all graduates. There were 58 Houston Future Teachers (HFT), 9 males and 49 females with a mean age of 24 years, all enrolled in undergraduate courses. There were 58 Houston Experienced Teachers (HET), 12 males and 46 females with a mean age of 33.2 years, all of whom were enrolled in graduate courses. For both regions experience was defined as at least one year of teaching in public schools. The bulk of experience in both regions was within the state (79% for Madison and 77% for Houston). Out of state experience was usually in adjacent states.

2. Procedure

Subjects completed a 56 item role definition instrument containing randomly ordered statements about teacher behaviors and educational practice. Subjects responded to each item on a 5 point Likert-type scale (absolutely must, preferably should, may or may not, preferably should not, absolutely must not), with responses scored as 1 to 5 respectively. Some negatively toned items were included to reduce response set.

C. Results

The raw scores of all Ss on the items of the instrument were pooled and subjected to a principal components factor analysis and varimax rotation (11). Using an eigen value of one produced eighteen factors accounting for 63.9% of the variance of the instrument. The scree test (3) was applied to determine that four factors warranted further consideration. A second factor analysis and rotation of these four factors accounted for 30.4% of the variance. Of the original variance accounted for by the first factor analysis 7.4% was redistributed over these four factors. The factors were identified as Conformity (maintaining environmental equilibrium by the avoidance of conflict), Autonomy (the freedom for teachers to permit student autonomy and facilitate social awareness), Discipline (concern with techniques of classroom management), and Communication (verbal and non-verbal communication between teachers and those in complementary roles).

Table I shows the three items which best exemplify each of the four factors according to the criteria of high factor loadings, and univocality (8).

Insert Table I about here

Table 2 shows the mean factor scores of each group on each of the four factors with a negative sign indicating support and a positive sign indicating opposition.

Table 3 contains the results of a series of one way analyses of variance used to compare the factor scores of the four groups.

Insert Tables 2 and 3 about here

There was a considerable degree of concurrence of the expectations of MET and MFT with only one significant difference. MFT were opposed to Discipline while MET were in favor of it ($p < .001$).

Contrary to the Wisconsin groups HFT and HET differed significantly on three of the four factors. HFT were more in favor of Conformity than HET ($p < .05$), HFT were opposed to Autonomy while HET favored it ($p < .025$), and HFT were opposed to Discipline while HET favored it ($p < .001$).

There was substantial agreement between the expectations of experienced teachers in both regions. There was only one significant difference with HET being in favor of Conformity while MET were opposed to it ($p < .001$).

The between region comparison of MFT and HFT revealed two significant differences. MFT opposed Conformity and favored Autonomy while HFT favored Conformity and opposed Autonomy (both $p < .001$).

Because age is often related to length of professional experience and the duration of exposure to the socialization process, analyses of covariance of the factor scores shown in Table 2, using age as the covariate, were performed to assess the effect of age. Because the mean group ages were close for each classification in both regions no significant effect was anticipated. This was born out by the analyses.

D. Discussion

The emergence of Conformity as the principal factor in this study is not surprising in the light of studies which have shown that

those who choose a teaching career tend to be conventional and conservative (4, 14, 7). Neither is the marked regional difference on this factor surprising if the Southern United States are considered as being more conservative than the Northern States. The one surprising outcome is the fact that HFT appeared as more conformist than HET. This is contrary to the common pattern of recruits in many professions being initially more idealistic than their colleagues. A stronger than usual preselective factor may have been operating for those entering teaching in Houston. Another possible explanation is that HET used in this study may have been much less conformist than HET in general. Their presence in post-graduate courses may have been evidence of such atypicality; however, monetary incentives for post-graduate degrees argues against this supposition. The absence of a significant difference between the expectations of MET and MFT regarding Conformity was also unexpected for similar reasons. It is reasonable to expect experienced teachers to be pro-conformist as a result of their experience and resocialization, however, the MET were almost as anti-conformist as the MFT. This challenges the notion that expectations of recruits for the role, become more conservative through on-the-job resocialization.

There is no obvious reason for this unexpected result. However, the apparent shift towards a less conformist attitude by MET may have been a function of their relative youth (mean age of 32.2 years) and/or the fact that they constituted an atypical sample of teachers (those going to summer school).

Because both MFT and MET were anti-conformist and HET and HFT were pro-conformist it was not surprising to find significant differences on

Conformity between regions for teachers and future teachers.

The fact that both MFT and MET were in favor of teacher and student autonomy appears to be consistent with their opposition to Conformity. The opposition of HFT to Autonomy and the support of HET for Autonomy is why both Madison groups differed significantly with HFT but not HET on this factor. The moderate support of HET for Autonomy suggests that experience may change a teacher's attitude towards this factor. This tends to support the socialization hypothesis but in the opposite direction to that expected. Perhaps this sympathy for Autonomy develops as a reaction to exigencies of teaching, especially pressure to conform.

The two significant differences on the factor of Discipline were similar for both geographical regions. Experienced teachers in both locations were in favor of Discipline while future teachers were opposed to it. The suggestion that experience develops an appreciation of the need for Discipline seems warranted by this evidence.

Although MET and MFT seemed to substantially agree upon the role of teacher the one significant difference on the factor of Discipline argues against the possibility that both groups came from a population of university students which was homogeneous with respect to expectations for the role of teacher.

The fact that HFT were pro-Conformist but opposed to Discipline is difficult to reconcile unless Conformity obviates the need for Discipline or an appreciation of its value.

The relative agreement on Communication implies that this is one area where experienced and future teachers may be receptive to training. This is encouraging since this factor is often a key to resolving conflicts in expectations regarding other factors. Improved

verbal and non-verbal communication skills may help raise the notoriously low level of communication in schools(cf. 9).

The criteria of high factor loading and univocality can be used to select the best items from the four identified factors as a basis for developing an instrument which measures conflicting expectations for the role of teacher in these areas. Before the ultimate step of using such an instrument for selective and predictive purposes in teacher training the factors require replication and validation.

Because of the restricted sampling firm conclusions cannot be drawn from this study. Nevertheless, results suggest that a recruit's adjustment to the pressures to conform within the social system of the school, the maintenance of his professional autonomy, coping with classroom management and communicating with those in complementary roles may be the four most important preoccupations of the new teacher and as such deserve special attention in teacher training.

D. Summary

A role definition instrument was administered to experienced and future teachers at the Universities of Wisconsin (Madison) and Houston in an attempt to identify areas of conflict between the expectations of these groups for the role of teacher. The factors of Conformity, Autonomy, Dicipline and Communication accounted for 30.4% of the instrument variance.

The Madison groups differed significantly only on Discipline ($p < .001$). The Houston groups differed significantly on Conformity ($p < .05$), Autonomy ($p < .025$) and Discipline ($p < .001$). The one significant regional difference for teachers was on Conformity ($p < .001$), while there were significant regional differences for future teachers

on Conformity (p <.001) and Autonomy (p <.001). Implications for teacher training were discussed.

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TABLE 1

Items With High Factor Loadings and Univocality for Each Factor

Factor	Item	Loading
Conformity	a) Help students acquire good manners and correct speech	.729
	b) Maintain an orderly and stable classroom environment	.672
	c) Keep the classroom tidy	.645
Autonomy	a) Develop independent critical thinking by students	.630
	b) Give sex instruction to students	.473
	c) Make students aware of the problems of society	.494
Discipline	a) Maintain strong discipline early in the year then ease up	.560
	b) Ignore the students who just can't be managed	.415
	c) Copy the techniques of successful colleagues	.417
Communication	a) Openly discuss all conflicts with colleagues and administrators	.526
	b) Discuss students' personal problems with them	.517
	c) Participate in extra-curricular activities such as coaching	.346

TABLE 2

Mean Group Factor Scores

Group	Factor			
	Conformity	Autonomy	Discipline	Communication
MET	.42401	-.17874	-.42975	.14074
MFT	.57429	-.23380	.42777	-.16220
HFT	-.65839	.44355	.38604	-.07096
HET	-.31448	-.02470	-.51823	.17063

- in favor

+ opposed

TABLE 3

Summary Table of Critical Variance Ratios for Comparisons of Group Factor Scores

	MFT				HET			
	Conformity	Autonomy	Discipline	Communication	Conformity	Autonomy	Discipline	Communication
MET	.67	.04	20.46*	2.55	16.68*	.70	.26	.03
HFT	60.06*	13.81*	.06	.23	4.84**	6.84**	31.87*	1.71

* $p < .001$

** $p < .025$

*** $p < .05$